

Evening Telegraph

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MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 1870.

SEWARD'S BAD BARGAINS.

It is said that the treaty for the acquisition of the Island of St. Thomas will come up for consideration in the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs to-morrow, and desperate efforts to impose on the American people the burdens of this worst of Seward's bad bargains may be anticipated. Congress has just taken the position that the country is too poor to expend for the improvement of League Island any portion of the moneys that would be realized by a sale of the site of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, and yet the nation is asked to spend ten millions for a little speck of land in the West Indies, which may at any moment be submerged by a tidal wave, or sunk forever below the surface of the ocean by volcanic action. If we have no money to spend in creating navy yards at home, it is folly to squander millions in attempts to create temporary naval stations abroad. St. Thomas is too small to be useful for agricultural purposes, and its unreliability as a port or depot has been fully demonstrated since the negotiations were commenced. The experience gained in the Alaska business should warn Congress of the folly of purchasing any more outlying and useless territory. Many years must elapse before the revenue derived from our new Northwestern acquisition will equal the current expenditures, and if the present policy prevails of maintaining a large military force there to protect a supposed population, and fomenting Indian wars to attract the gangs of frontier harpies who are perpetually seeking opportunities of enrichment at the national expense, tens of thousands of millions will be squandered on Mr. Seward's white elephant of Alaska before any sensible advantage will be gained from this purchase by the American people. The wisest thing that can be done is to abandon the whole country as speedily as possible, and to let the Indians, fishermen, seal hunters, and prospectors fight out their battles, until an actual necessity arises for a serious attempt to develop this unpromising region. It is bad enough to own Alaska, but the luxury of attempting to govern it is entirely too expensive for a country that desires to reduce taxation; and as for the delineate of St. Thomas, it is decidedly too precious a morsel for a republican people who count their indebtedness by thousands of millions.

THE WAR IN CUBA.

M. ENRIQUE OLIVIER, the French Cabinet, has issued a circular to the Procurators Generaux, defining the liberties of the press. It demands an apology to the French Emperor, and asks that the insurgents still continue in Cuba, but as one of the latest despatches from Havana characterizes as a severe struggle a contest in which the Spaniards only lost one officer and four men, the operations are apparently on a very small scale. The most serious event lately recorded is the alleged repulse of a Spanish general, with a loss of thirty-six officers and four hundred men killed and wounded; but, on the other hand, it is said that the insurgents have been driven out of several districts which they formerly occupied, and the new gunboats which have recently arrived on the island are expected to render material if not decisive aid to the Government. The Spanish Americans have a system of prolonging indecisive wars which is happily not followed in this country. In Mexico and South America anarchy has become well-nigh chronic, and the people do not seem to be able to either prosecute a war vigorously while it is progressing, or to discontinue a struggle after it has degenerated into a wanton sacrifice of life and property. It is difficult to extract the truth from the conflicting rumors forwarded to this country from Cuba, but the weight of testimony is decidedly favorable to the theory that the revolutionary movement is well-nigh crushed, and that its leaders are struggling now rather to secure favorable terms, or from an inclination to make a graceful surrender than with rational hope of achieving a complete victory.

THE TWO GRAND ARMIES.

The Grand Army of the Republic is an organization that has no Democratic affinities, and is therefore a special object of dislike to the party that supported the Rebellion. It is true that the Grand Army of the Republic professes to have no objects of a political nature in view, but it is well known that it does exert more or less political influence, and renegades Unionists, like Frank P. Blair, Jr., have attempted to turn their connection with it to account in furthering the interests of the Democratic party. Every one remembers how Blair was put down at the Long Branch reunion when, in a drunken speech, he attempted to vituperate the cause for which he had fought, and this and other experiments have probably convinced the Democratic managers that it is useless for them to expect any sympathy from the mass of the soldiers and sailors who fought to save the Union. As an offset, therefore, to the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization under Democratic auspices has been started in New York and Brooklyn, to be called the Grand Army of the Constitution. The motto of this association will, or at least it ought to be, "The Constitution as it was, and we shall expect to find it, if it spreads beyond the confines of New York city, such whose congenial spirits as Frank P. Blair, Jr., Robert E. Lee, George A. Custer, Ned Pease, George W. Morgan, Wm. H. Hampton, W. S. Hancock, Braxton Bragg, and others who

professed to differ to some extent in their political sympathies eight years ago. The only thing we fear from such an organization as this is, that it will probably have the effect of making the Grand Army of the Republic throw the weight of its influence in the political scale. This organization is ostensibly designed for the purpose of maintaining a social bond of fellowship between the men who fought in a common cause, and so far it is commendable and out of the reach of criticism, but as too frequently happens in such cases, its principal object, so far as the public are concerned, appears to be to push into notice a clique of ex-volunteers officers who are extremely solicitous that their services in the field should be rewarded by the fastest offices in the gift of the State or nation. There are too many of these gentlemen now whose war records will not bear a very critical examination, feeding at the public crib, and a rival Democratic "Grand Army" will give them more opportunities than ever to push themselves into notice. Otherwise than this, we doubt whether the combination to support the Constitution as it was will materially jeopardize the interests of the Republican party, or the liberal policy that it has inaugurated.

The CHEVALIER VAUX emerged from his obscurity on Saturday evening to address the Democracy of the city on the subject of "The Live Issues of the Day." Another of the Democratic lights had been discouraging on "The Dead Issues," and that's what brought Sir Richard to his feet. Although so very much of a veteran, he still lives, and it is perhaps quite natural that he should imagine the Democratic party to be alive also. The Chevalier was as emotional as usual, and during the course of his remarks referred several times to the fifteenth amendment, negro suffrage, radical corruption, and other topics that engross the attention of the present generation, as well as to some that were buried with the last generation and the Democratic party, without Sir Richard being, as yet, aware of the fact that either the dead issues or the dead Democracy, or even the last generation, are in their graves. Such, at least, we imagine to have been the drift of his speech, which we have not yet perused, owing to a pressure of other and more weighty matters. When Sir Richard entered the hall to deliver his address, he carried upon his head the brand new hat concerning which we recently discussed at length. The opinions of the crowd of untried present appeared to be about evenly divided upon its merits; and although there was a large party in favor of knocking it into a semblance of its discarded predecessor, the wise counsels of the opposite side prevailed, and it was suffered to emerge from the rendezvous without disfigurement.

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